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# Hustler Foretells the Advent of the Hysterical Phallus

by Erin Runions

**H**ustler magazine thinks it has ridiculed Heritage Minister Sheila Copps, by publishing her picture alongside pictures of four vaginas with a prize for guessing which one belongs to her. Ironically, it has merely revealed its own absurd self-aggrandizing misogyny.

I mean, really, what's so offensive about being called a twat? I'm the proud owner of a twat, imagine having four! It seems to me that this Hustler "spread" is only ridiculing if vaginas are considered lewd, ugly, obscene. Isn't the force of this "ridicule" lost, if vaginas are held up as beautiful, intriguing, ambrosial cornucopias of pleasure, rather than as shameful symbols of "lack?" Hustler has only proven that it is a misogynist publication, and that this (and many other) hit porn

publications are based on the denigration of women's bodies. A Hustler spokesperson actually said that Copps, as a political figure, should expect to be ridiculed, thus clearly articulating the ideological premise on which this magazine is produced and consumed: cunts are the ultimate object of ridicule.

Hustler magazine thinks it has produced some kind of free-speech political satire, opposing Bill C-55, introduced by Copps in the House of Commons to ensure that Canadian advertising does not appear in "split-run" magazines (Canadian editions of American publications; usually containing little Canadian content but drawing heavily on the Canadian advertising market). But if "political" is thought of as the play of power relations (not just

as parliamentary proceedings), the satire is turned in the other direction. Hustler is only satirizing itself, its pathetic, typical sexism, by attempts to dismiss a real threat, introduced by a real woman, through sexual commentary on her body parts. How many times have we all lived through that grrrls? Surprise, surprise, there is no engagement with the real issues here, just deflection by a shift in the discussion to another subject - one in which we've all learned to feel lacking, unconfident, imperfect - our female bodies. The funny thing is, Hustler couldn't draw better attention to this sexist technique if it tried. What better way to represent lack of power/phallus/penis than through a vagina; no, not one, but four, put into competition with each other. How

much more explicit could they make it? Is this an unsubtlety contest? The loud subtext - "hey, you can't do that, you don't have a penis; see, what you have is only a twat, only good for inserting my penis into, and at that not as good as the next one" - is practically written in neon lights. Let's not put too fine a point on it boys.

Hustler magazine thinks it's pretty funny and clever, I guess. But I think for once the tables are turned. Sure they've emphasized women's lack, funny for some, and humiliating for others. But at the end of the day, the emphasis on lack has thrown the phallus into stark relief, inflated it to astronomic, yes grotesque, proportions. Oh dear, I worry, it might pop. Ah, the hysterical phallus looms... what shall we do to treat it?

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Matt Bergbusch  
Ph.D. English

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# Never Swim Alone

"PREDATORIAL HABITS, THE INSATIABILITY OF DESIRE, AND RAMPANT CONSUMERISM"

by Autumn Haag

**P**layer's Theater's new play, *Never Swim Alone*, is described by dramaturge Laura Levin as "post-modern, post-feminist, post-whatever", though it cleverly manages to go beyond all labeling to explore numerous social issues relevant in the 1990's.

*Never Swim Alone* was written by Canadian playwright Daniel MacIvor. Levin notes that this group of actors worked closely together on the play's use of gender roles and even added pieces

of poetry from Margaret Atwood, Donald Justice, and Anne Sexton in an attempt to "allow for a more in-depth understanding of male-female relations in the play."

The play's two male characters are Frank and Bill, and are played by Philip Graeme and Michael Mill, respectively. They have been friends since childhood, and are approaching middle age. Almost immediately, after the lights go down, the audience witnesses the pair competing over various topics (picked by the referee) ranging from "Dad" to "Business Ties". The winner of the debate is rewarded with an

opportunity to speak to the audience about anything, including his childhood, his kids, or his friend's wife's sexual indiscretions. The character of the referee, played by Moira Sauer, not only acts as judge, but also represents the women Frank and Bill lie to during the course of the play, namely their wives.

This verbal competition between Frank and Bill escalates from one topic to the next. The men often speak in unison, which highlights their similarities, pro-

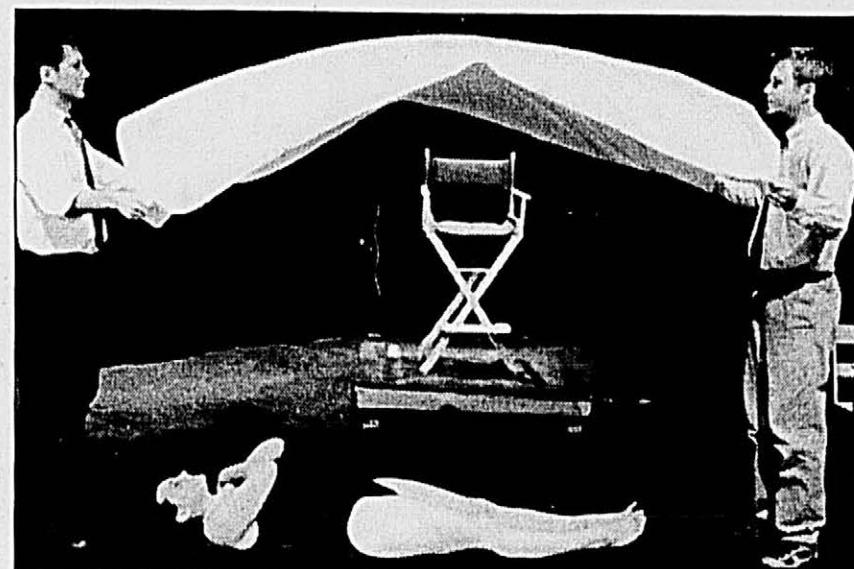


PHOTO BY CATHERINE FARQUHARSON

ducing an eerie effect. As the tension builds, each character sits facing one half of the audience, and tells those who can hear him a different story about the other's father. Not only was there remarkable timing on the part of the actors here, but it showed how fierce, and in the words of the play, "a bit too palpably desper-

ate" their characters are to win this battle of wits.

The play also explains the roots of the competition between the two men. When they were younger, they had a swimming race with a girl they met at the beach, and she drowned. This event is depicted through a se-

(continued on page 10)

## FROM THE SWAMP

# The Sure Thing

WHAT THE BIG DEAL IS ABOUT *STAR WARS*,  
*EPISODE I - THE PHANTOM MENACE*.

by "Twinkletoes" Von  
Swamphausen

Last week, the trailer for *Star Wars, Episode I - The Phantom Menace* was first screened in New York City. Theatres playing it saw their sales go up by a quarter. At the Ziegfeld Theatre, over 30% of the audience left right after the trailers.

(What bothers me about this, is not the absurdity of paying 8\$ for a trailer. What bothers me is that some of those people were on dates.)

On page 58 of the February issue of *Premiere*, George Lucas has written an article entitled "The Future Starts Here," about the impending medium-change the movie industry is about to undergo: the shift from analog photography to digital electronics. In fact, the whole issue is obsessed with this topic.

Lucas, practically the father of this innovation, is proactively combating the inevitable criticism this change will receive. The diversion from the genuine human body as a cinematic vehicle will receive some cruel treatment by theory, and in his article Lucas is swift to point out the innate artificiality of all photography as a defence for the synthetic character of his impending behemoth. Lucas' goal is to ease the transition from a George Eastman (inventor of celluloid film) movie landscape to an Industrial Light

and Magic movie landscape. This is, he says, a sure thing.

In 1985 Rob Reiner made a romantic comedy starring John Cusack and Daphne Zuniga called *The Sure Thing*. In it, Cusack crossed the U.S. from New England to California on the promise of the sexual bounty of Nicolette Sheridan. In a cute dialogue with a truck driver, Cusack describes Sheridan as "No questions asked, no strings attached, no guilt involved: a Sure Thing."

Nicolette Sheridan had her steadiest work on soap opera *Knots Landing*, in which she played opposite William Devane. Devane once played a double-dealing double-agent in John Schlesinger's 1976 thriller *The Marathon Man* with Dustin Hoffman and Sir Laurence Olivier. *The Marathon Man* is famous for a scene where evil Nazi Olivier performs unnecessary dental surgery on neurotic grad student Hoffman, while repeating the phrase: "Is it safe?" "It" refers to a stash of diamonds which the Nazi had secreted away during the holocaust.

*Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend* was the biggest hit off Howard Hawks' Marilyn Monroe movie musical *Gentleman Prefer Blondes*, a garish flick about two American showgirls on a ship to France, one out for money and

the other for love. Of the 1930's to 1950's giants (Billy Wilder, John Huston, John Ford, etc.) Hawks is among the least lauded, though his credits include *Bring up Baby*, *Rio Bravo* and an oft-forgotten classic, William Faulkner's treatment of Raymond Chandler's novel *The Big Sleep*. *The Big Sleep* is a fantastic private eye noir starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, containing one of the most perplexing narrative conundrums in classical Hollywood - the murder of a chauffeur, integral to the plot, is never explained (Legend has it that Hawks actually called Chandler to ask him who the culprit was. Chandler replied: "How should I know? You figure it out"). But what I was getting at was a movie Bogart made, or rather the movie that made Bogart, four years before.

*Casablanca* is probably the only movie extant which really gives *Star Wars* (the highest grossing movie of all time) a run for its money, when it comes to pure popular appeal; of being emblematic of a whole tradition of human creative patterns. Neither film is really perfect. What is significant is how well we convince ourselves that they are.

*Casablanca*, like *The Sure Thing*, *The Marathon Man*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *The Big*

*Sleep* depend integrally upon the actual, verifiable, theoretically existing human body. From the exploitation of the sexualized femininity of Sheridan and Monroe to the physical maceration of Hoffman and the aesthetic qualities of Bogart's iconic face, twentieth century cinema has been obsessed with the human body. Since W.C. Fields invented the close-up, our experience of a movie is contingent upon our genuine belief that however augmented and cosmeticized, the figures we see on screen are real, honest, live human beings that have or do exist. This is what is so damn tantalizing; that the image is both real and fake.

"In the Twentieth Century," writes Lucas on page 59 of *Premiere*, "Cinema was celluloid; the cinema of the 21st century will be digital." A few years ago, there was a Coke Commercial showcasing the new possibilities of digitization: it featured a digital Humphrey Bogart drinking coke. This Humphrey is nearly indistinguishable from the one sitting at the bar in *Casablanca* smoking hand-rolled cigarettes. The difference is that Coke Bogart never performed those actions, whereas classic Bogart did.

His very corporeality is now ambiguous. However contrived and fictitious his portrayal may

have once been, it has never until now gone to the point where we do not know whether his body is moved by his mind or by a computer.

What I'm trying to impress upon you is the big deal that *Episode I* represents. Over the last twenty years, mastery of computer generation has been born in a string of films from *Star Wars* through *Tron*, *The Terminator*, *The Abyss*, *Toy Story* and *Antz*. But it will be *Episode I* that will serve as the benchmark for the era of the new medium. This is not at all like the advent of sound or of colour; this is the coming of age of a medium which has built its rhetoric and grammar in the last twenty years. The future starts here, it's a sure thing.

But the problem is that there are strings attached, there are questions to be asked and there may be guilt involved. We will eventually lose our capacity to know for certain what is a live human being, and what is a generated, impersonated, disembodied image. We'll still have the same old story, the fight for love and glory, but the advent of *Episode I* will unleash a host of new problems and issues of spectatorship. Will the new medium support narratives like *Casablanca*? What the rules will be and how the industry will change, these things I leave to divine Providence.

But going to the movies just to see the trailer. That's fucking sad.

# Trading words with Montreal sound poets: Alex Boutros and Kaarla Sundstrom

by Julia Dault

censored

they watch us,  
stalk us.  
we can see their eyes,  
glowing spies reflect our every action  
without compassion.

force-fed their image in their see-through mirrors  
we endure the years,  
shift the gears  
at the grind and snap of their day to day.

they outnumber us,  
encumber us.  
tapping our recourse to information,  
barring the way to illicit salvation,  
demanding the drone of complicit desire,  
they crave the new wave of repeated attire.

they steer us,  
spurn us,  
turn from us.  
as we churn an endless eddy on the periphery,  
steady in the wake of their bottom-heavy stake,  
in our silence  
their violence  
is taxing our minds  
to find their dis-ease  
and get

it  
  
out.

**//**Legba has always been about space, about creating a space for the circulation of ideas, about providing a space for diverse genres such as dance, music and spoken word to butt up against each other, about taking the space to speak to the bizarre, the profane, the ironic, the hilarious, the tragic, the sacred, the awesome, and the unjust."

I spoke to sound poets and Legba creators Kaarla Sundstrom and Alex Boutros about their show, their collaborative art, and their reasons for words.

**Julia Dault:** Let's start with a little background, some history. How long you have been writing and performing?

**Alex Boutros:** Well, we met at the University of Western Ontario, where we were both taking classical music. We both had been performing in a variety of forms and genres since we were pretty young. We moved to Montréal and completely changed our focus. I started performing a little bit before we started performing together, but we have been writing collaboratively since we moved to Montréal. So, we started writing together four or five years ago, and started performing about a year and a half ago.

**JD:** How do you perform together? You write collaboratively, but how does that work? How do you play off each other?

**Kaarla Sundstrom:** It depends. Sometimes we just sit down without an idea as to what kind of subject matter we'll be dealing with, or we might just have a sense of what we want to do, and because it's sound poetry we

might get a rhythm we really want to use and then put the words into that. Often, somebody comes up with a good line, and we just trade lines back and forth. Usually we write smaller sections and we go off of those. Often what we write becomes a section and the other person might end up writing a chorus almost. So, it grows organically. It's different every time. We often don't really know what we're talking about until we're half way through, and then we try to tie it together and go back and revise.

**AB:** So, it's collaborative sound poetry. We call it sound poetry and not spoken word because we're really interested in playing with musical structures. Because our background is musical, we are interested in looking at musical structures in spoken speech. So, it's not strictly spoken word, we're interested in mixing. We don't really see that clear division between the genres of spoken word and music. We see them as blurred.

**JD:** Do you think Montréal affected your switch from Classical music to spoken word? Do you think the scene here affected that at all?

**AB:** I wonder, I've never really thought about that before.

**KS:** We weren't in the scene in other cities. I know Toronto has a pretty good scene, not that we were ever writing and living in Toronto, but we were in London, Ontario. It was a little smaller, the opportunities would have been far less. There would have been readings that were a lot more literary.

**AB:** But it's an interesting question because I never really thought how we did suddenly pick up the genre of spoken word. We both had written literary writings before.

I think the accessibility of the scene in Montréal probably had something to do with where we are right now. I don't know if it made us go into spoken word per se, but it made it fairly easy to get on stage, fairly easy to get back into performance. That is certainly something we missed having left classical music: performance itself.

The scene was accessible, it was there and laid out for you and there were a lot of shows happening.

**KS:** It's also a growing field. People are more and more doing spoken word, as opposed to writing lyrics for music or simply maintaining a textual endeavor.

**JD:** Why do you think spoken

word is so popular, so accessible?

**AB:** I think part of it has to do with the merging of different genres. There have always been oral traditions that have entered into the music scene. Certainly rap is an oral tradition that has become a musical genre and hip hop and things like that. I think spoken word is very much going along the same lines. Its popularity, in terms of its marketing -whether it's popular when it's marketed in our capitalist society- has to do with its being able to cross into music.

We listen to the radio now, there are a lot of musicians who will do a spoken word piece in the middle of an album. That's definitely done something for its popularity. Where that comes from, I'm not entirely sure. But I think that's definitely made it more of a popular genre.

**KS:** You read a book, and that has been put into a hierarchy of more elevated culture. Then, you get popular music which of course reaches so many more people and has such a mass appeal, and yet in certain circles anyway, it is something that is of less social status. You're less esteemed when you're a popular musician. That's certainly part of my experience, coming through classical music where that division is also very apparent. It's the best of both worlds. You get to write and yet you get to perform, and you get an interaction with an audience.

The first textual product that you will probably encounter when you're a sound poet is to be put on a CD as opposed to paper. And that's just a totally different experience. Everybody likes the newest thing and you know, everything's been done. It's not surprising that what happens in post-modern society (laughs) is that we just blur boundaries and pull from different disciplines.

**JD:** Does each one of your pieces have a message? How would you describe the experience of listening to one of your pieces?

**KS:** Some of them are easier to sit back and listen to as music, and I think some of them are very difficult to understand in one hearing. When there are two voices too, sometimes if they're overlapping, it's more about the sound of it, and the sense of the piece in relation to what you have picked up that you might come away with. If you

# "IT'S A THEMATICAL, SCHEMATIC PLOT"

read it on paper, I think you would probably locate something akin to a message. It's a process of remembering it as an audience member and also the possibility of hearing it again, which is very different than a textual sort of thing where you can really pick something apart.

**AB:** And when it comes to saying what our pieces are about, obviously we have ideas about what they're about. But we've really learned that, performing on stage, everybody takes something different from it. Everybody hears it a little bit differently. It's those little nuances, even if we have a piece about the ills of capitalism the fact is that some people get something slightly different from it. We hear back from the audience, and the audience will talk to us and interact with us, and we hear what they hear; it makes us see our pieces differently. So, we're constantly reinterpreting our own work. That affects the performance too. When somebody comes up and says, "I really like that line," when you get to it the next time, you're much more conscious of it. You might emphasize it more, and it becomes more of a highlight of the piece. So, they really are fluid.

**JD:** The name of the show, Legba, what does it mean?

**AB:** As a word, Legba is the name of a spirit or a god from the Voodoo pantheon. He is the spirit that opens the door to the spirit world. He's the first spirit to whom you talk to get into the spirit world. It's a horribly complicated name, and I wish sometimes that I didn't choose it (laughing). I guess the significance for that in terms of the show is that, the show is very much about opening the door to creativity, to the spirit of performance. That's basically the reason why we chose it.

**KS:** In terms of Legba the spirit, because Voodoo is syncretic with Christianity, or Catholicism in particular, he's synchronized with St. Peter. That may illuminate anything else about the nature of him.

**AB:** St. Peter is the gate-keeper in Christianity. Voodoo is a complicated religion and I'm always worried to talk about it.

**KS:** There are so many preconceptions.

**AB:** But he is a spirit, and people who are practitioners will recognize the name.

**JD:** How long have you been

putting Legba on for?

**AB:** The upcoming Legba is the fifth one. We did four last year. Well, four in the last school year, so 1997-98. It turned out to be a bi-monthly series last year. Then we took a really long break, and in the interim produced the Kinnie Star show which was just really fun. And now we're back. So this is the fifth of the series, and it is a series. It is about interdisciplinary work. So, whether the artist is an interdisciplinary artist — in other words pulling from different fields — or the fact that it's a cabaret, it is very much about exploring interdisciplinary stuff.

**JD:** You did mention to me earlier that, by coincidence everyone on the Legba list happens to be female. Do you feel that as women in the Montréal scene, it affects how you speak to the audience, or what you write about? You don't know what it's like to be male

**AB:** We do try to look at things with complexity. So, when it comes to issues of gender, while that's definitely part of our work. When you do work that's about social justice, ideally you're looking for solutions. To us it doesn't seem helpful to be accusatory. So, we're not accusatory. There's

may simply be in the act of telling a story. In itself, it feels somehow resistive to tell it in its complexity, not to deny an experience that we might narrate.

**AB:** In terms of the bill being all female, we don't go looking for all woman performers. It's not an all anything show. What we do is look for performers that we think would come together to make a — not cohesive because obviously it's a cabaret — but a good atmosphere for our audience, and something our audience could thrive on.

We certainly look for performers that we think are the best. The fact that they're all women, well, we like to say that it's incidental (laughs). For this show, we did ask male performers who were unable to perform.

**KS:** I think this might be the first Legba where it's all women.

**AB:** There are some guys float-

tant to...

**KS:** give back to the performers who enabled the show. It's only fair.

**AB:** Right. And because we have the privilege of doing other things, and not being producers for our livelihood, we are able to not take money as producers and promoters, which is a nice privilege to have. It's in no way a criticism of people who do.

**KS:** Yeah, it's a really difficult way to make a living.

**AB:** We make sure local performers get recognized for the real work they do and keeping the scene alive. I think that can really go unnoticed sometimes and be taken for granted. It can lead to that sort of slippery slope of devaluing these performers and not acknowledging that there's such a vibrant scene in Montréal. It is really vibrant. There's a lot of talent.

**JD:** I'm curious, and I'm excited to see the show, as to how you both perform as a unit. Do you both speak at the same time?

**KS:** It's much more a back and forth in terms of the content.

**JD:** I've never seen two people perform spoken word as a unit

**AB:** Well, it's one of the things that we're proud of (laughs) because it is a little bit challenging first to write together collaboratively, and create a single piece with two people, and second, to find a voice for it. It is very much an interplay of two voices. There's definitely overlap of the two voices, but if we want the message to get across, which we do, then either one voice has to go under the other so people can hear, or we say things in unison, or back and forth. The back and forth is very quick. Sometimes people have a hard time telling whose speaking.

Legba will be at Graffiti Tango (4848 Blvd. St. Laurent) on January 23rd, 1999. The show begins at 8:30 pm. \$6. This Legba will feature Anilia Soyinka, Debbie Young, Anne Stone, Alexis O'hara, Nah-eelah, Bronna Levy, Mireille Painchaud, Elizabeth Anka Vajagic and of course "Legba lassies," Kaarla Sundstrom and Alex Boutros.



Alex Boutros



Kaarla Sundstrom



(laughs) so, obviously this question is a little hard to answer, but are any of your poems about gender?

**AB:** Our material is about social justice, and about exploring issues of identity, so some of them are about gender.

**KS:** They're not always vocalized through the female perspective. So, in that sense, it's not like gender completely dictates our subject matter. Although, we obviously talk about gender, if we're talking about social issues because they often overlap.

We do really want to explore the complexity of these issues, and the fact that everybody is in some way marginalized, and everybody is in some way complicit in the marginalization of somebody else. So, it's not about pointing our finger. Although, we do point our finger at systems like capitalism.

**KS:** And then it's a little easier. To avoid getting into the realm of simply ranting about something, or simply criticizing something, solutions to problems that we pose

# The Immortals

## ROMEO AND JULIET

by Johanne St-Martin

**B**oy meets girl. Girl meets boy. They fall in love. Their families forbid them love. They are separated from one another. But, as the cliché goes: "love conquers all" and the lovers are reunited.

It's not as if we aren't familiar with the direction of this story. In the case of *Romeo and Juliet* the reunion of the star crossed lovers means reunion through death. Romeo and Juliet's mortality brings to them immortality.

Why is it that the more we know the story, the more we love it? Are we suckers for sticking to it?

Well, because the theatre is an art form, there aren't any right or wrong answers. It's generally accepted that Shakesperian plays have traveled through time in a legenday fashion. It almost takes you aback to see that in our fast-food society, people still think of *Romeo and Juliet*, as one of, if not the greatest love story ever written.

Part of what makes *Romeo and Juliet* so grand is that it carries with it rich tones of mysticism. This mythical appeal is what sustains our attention. While the story line contains chaos and duality, it also possesses a deep

structure which unifies the text and creates fluidity of plot. It is this deep structure that stays with us.

Robertson Davies once said that "a truly great book should be read in youth, again in maturity, and once more in old age." The same can be said of plays. Every time we see a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, it tells us something new through the interpretation. As certain aspects are brought to the surface of the performance, others are subdued and somewhat "hidden". It is this which keeps people coming back

(continued on page 10)



# A Short Introduction to Lesbian Erotica

A REVIEW OF *HOT & BOthered: SHORT SHORT FICTION ON LESBIAN DESIRE*, AND  
*PILLOW TALK: LESBIAN STORIES BETWEEN THE COVERS*

by Marjorie Silverman

You honour the Femme that is in me. I open my legs to you in conscious vulnerability. I open my legs knowing that I want this. I want you. To take me. To make love to me. To

lesbian erotica and many devoted to lesbian fiction. With so many new books coming out (excuse the pun) it can be a challenge - albeit a pleasurable one - to sift out the good from the not so good.

*Hot & Bothered: Short Short Fiction on Lesbian Desire* edited by Karen X. Tulchinsky is a 200 page compilation of sixty-nine very short stories including pieces by well-known dykes Dorothy Allison, Joan Nestle, and Elana Dykewomon. Also featured are works by many lesser known lesbian writers, including many Canadians such as Anna Nobile, Lydia Kwa and Judith Quinlan:

Some of the stories in *Hot & Bothered* are slightly stale, as they play on traditional butch/femme stereotypes and S/M dynamics. Still, there is a wide variety of successful stories in this anthology. *Lemon Scent* by Shani Mootoo, author of the celebrated 1996 novel *Cereus Blooms at Night*, is one such story. In *Lemon Scent*, Mootoo offers a glimpse into the life of a married woman who is getting ready to meet her female lover under the watchful

gaze of her suspicious husband. *Rita Wong's Touch: A Natural History*, weaves a web of lyrical poetic prose that leaves the senses aroused: "the loop of sensations the fingers absorb, tap the rhythm of a slow morning ease into feeding at noon."

The one underlying characteristic of *Hot & Bothered* is that the stories are extremely short. Just as I was starting to warm up, they were over. In the introduction Karen Tulchinsky states that these stories are "snappy fiction...short and sweet, quick and rough", and that's exactly what the reader gets. One quick taste and then it's on to the next lover.

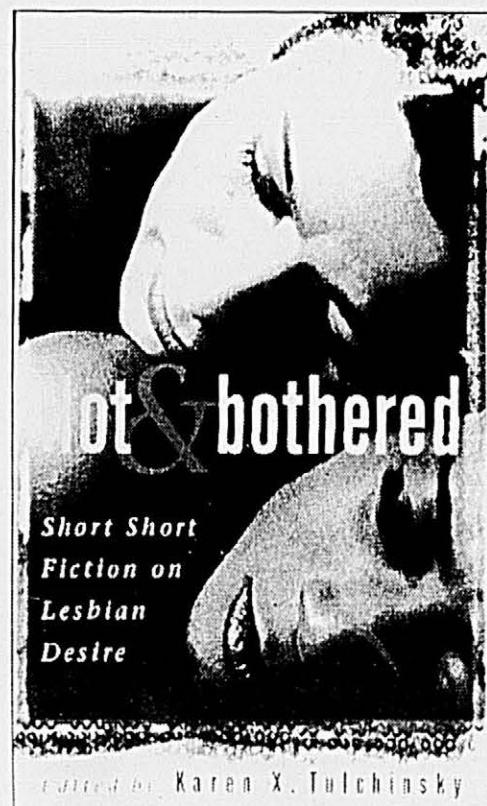
Unlike its snapshot fiction counterpart, the stories in *Pillow Talk* are considerably more languid and contain actual plot development. With twenty-three stories in a nearly 300 page volume, the reader is enticed with not only the climax but the foreplay as well.

Edited by Lesléa Newman, a popular figure in the lesbian fiction scene, most of the stories in this volume are well chosen. There are of

course a few exceptions to the rule. Stories such as "Crushed" by Janet Mason and "Come Friday" by Judy MacLean leave much to be desired and make clear the disparities between simply average erotica writers and those that are truly skilled. A skilled piece of erotica should seem natural and flowing rather than stilted or concocted. It can usually be determined within the

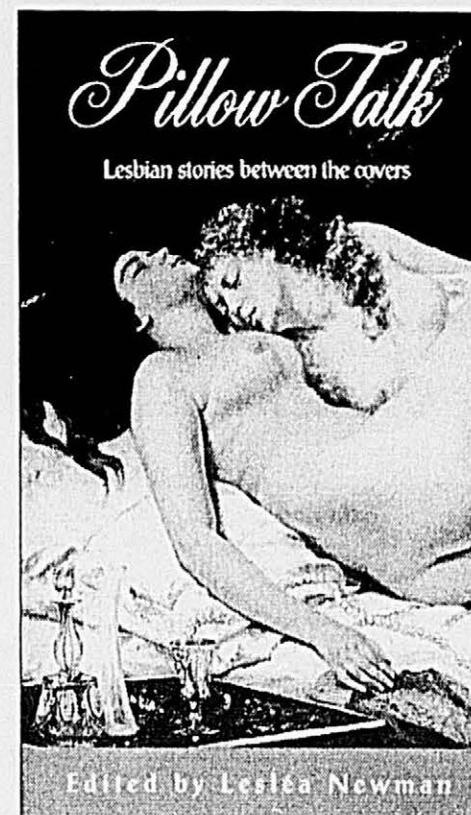
most of the stories in *Pillow Talk* are quite original. "Petal Sweat" by Susan Kan describes how to find romance through magnetic

"I open my legs to you in conscious vulnerability"



fuck me. - "Are You Mine" by Terrie Hamakazi in *Hot and Bothered: Short Short Fiction on Lesbian Desire*

Unfamiliar to most, lesbian erotica is a quickly expanding genre. The queer bookstore Androgyne (3636 St. Laurent Blvd.) has two shelves well-stocked with



first paragraph if a writer possesses the velvet touch.

With that said, I must add that

fridge poetry, and "The Carousel" by Mary Diane Hausman chronicles a night in the life a mysterious auburn-haired carousel horse addict. "Visit to the Seamstress" by Jess Wells is also an original piece about a sexy seamstress who seduces her new lesbian neighbour.

Lesléa Newman asks in the introduction to *Pillow Talk*: "What do lesbians do in bed?" The answer, if these two books are any indication, is a myriad of different things. The stories in these volumes range from the subtle and sublime to the harsh and the rough, and thus they are sure to fulfill a whole spectrum of preferences. Although not all the stories in either book are one-hundred percent satisfying, the fact that they are out there in bookstores beside many other similar volumes is an indication that lesbian fiction and erotica are finally gaining deserved attention.

And that is something to create steam about.

# Creative Space

## To My Companion On a Midnight Walk

We conversed on the topic of your mother,  
 Civil rhetoric on rare, radiant maternal  
 And politely, exuberantly, you mentioned  
 Her better qualitative terms in totality.  
 I watched you lean lucky  
 Over the thirst of the black water  
 That decided to drink the sky  
 And I wanted to ask you WHY,  
 What if  
 And WHEN,  
 And I wondered if you'd rescue me  
 If I fell in.

The moon goddess reclined,  
 Rested her fair face on the glass cracked surface,  
 A pale orb, she illuminated your gap-tooth grin.  
 You asked me about my weight  
 And I told you I wasn't hungry  
 Because I am full of FATE,  
 My expression hiding the fact  
 That I am and open book.  
 You traced your name in that black syrup and I  
 Stared into my make-shift mental sun,  
 Waiting an eternity  
 For my eyes to adjust.

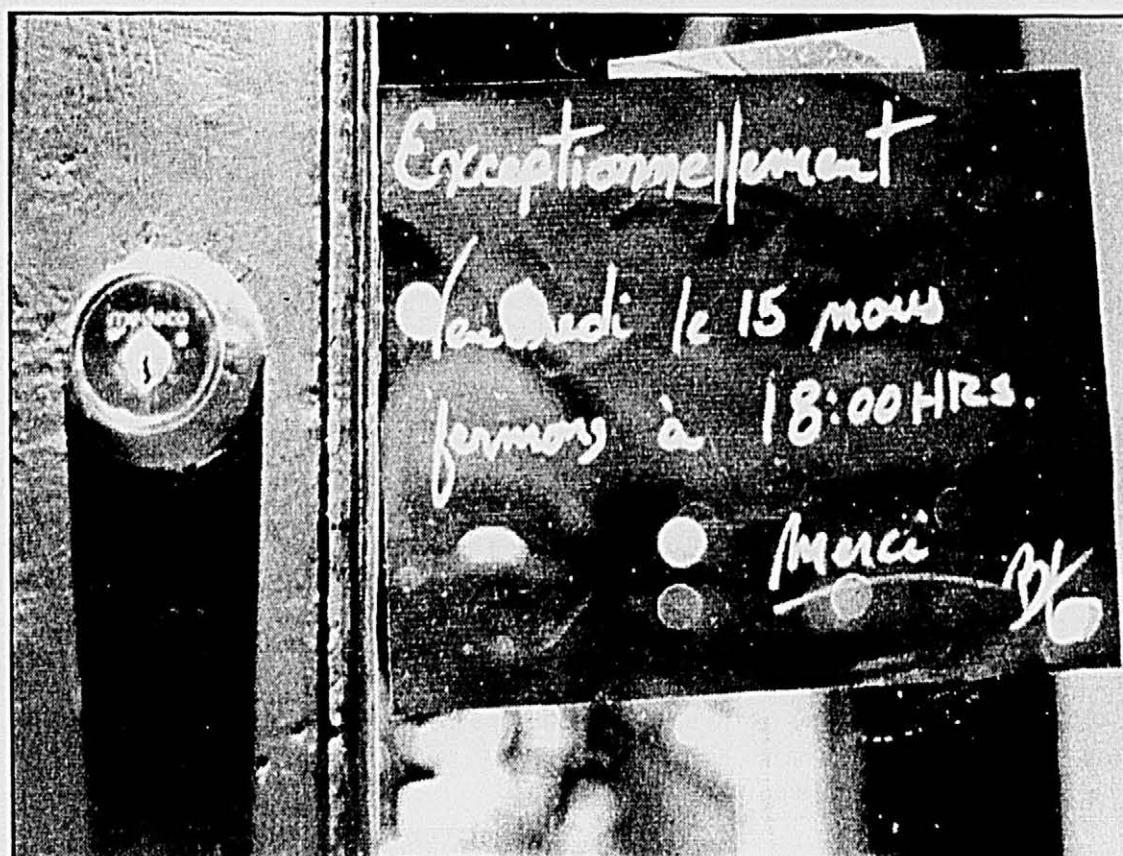
Remembering the time you told me  
 No one was looking  
 And wondering what the hell you meant,  
 Wondering if it's you  
 Or if it's the impossibilities  
 In your futile phrases  
 Or the curve of your neck,  
 That fleeting manic mistrust  
 In the spark of  
 The bluest beloved eye,  
 That glow that illuminates your gap-tooth grin  
 As you consider  
 Pushing me in.

You wear your heart in your left front  
 Plaid shirt breast pocket,  
 Letting it beat just enough for that  
 Crimson Stain to show,  
 Trying desperately to cover it with  
 Vague sentences and still stifling SILENCES.  
 I wear my heart on a gilded silver platter,  
 Labeled with your hated name,  
 Knife and Fork nearby for your FEAST.

Pay no attention to the pale moon reality,  
 But imagine me miraculously  
 Altered- (Perfection and Longing)  
 As I look to you in the reflection,  
 So fascinating and impossible  
 Beneath the black syrup,  
 Wondering if you'd rescue me  
 When I fall in.

*Stacey May Fowles*

THE MCGILL DAILY



by céline heinbecker

## From Jo to Mo

Satchmo's got a right to sing the blues  
 but you'n me honey, that ain't our hue

Besides, let's get one thing straight,  
 you're a swinger, not a sad stepper

*Anonymous*

give me creative items. pictures, poems,  
 paintings, prose, or anything else you  
 consider creative. give it to me. give it to me  
 now or tomorrow or the next day. drop it off  
 in the pete box at the daily office shatner b-03.  
 now. give it. now.

(continued from page 8) again and again, searching for new views and illuminations which bring the text to life.

Granted, a director's mandate is to make the production his or her own in terms of style and interpretation. This means that no two productions can be alike simply because they are the products of differing goals and visions.

Okay, that's enough philosophy. What then is the deal with Théâtre du Nouveau Monde's 1999 production of *Romeo and Juliet*? (That's right, this production is staged in the tongue of Molière). Well, for starters, the theatre company wants to lure you in with a rather revealing poster. (Apparently sex sells rather nicely in our society). Indeed, Romeo and Juliet are presented to the public bare chested and in a Ying-Yang position. So

much for relying solely on the beauty of Shakespeare's text. But since you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, you shouldn't judge a play by its poster either. Indeed, the production was wonderful as a whole and exquisite in some of its artistic choices.

Director Martine Baulne wanted to bring simplicity and a touch of modernism to the play and that she did. Baulne said that she "didn't treat *Romeo and Juliet* in a romantic way, but rather from a multiple passions stand point." She feels that "A passion is more painful" in such that "it totally commits the individuals."

Although presumably passionate about the play itself, Baulne didn't commit herself to the translations already available to her. Instead, she enlisted playwright and experienced Shakespeare translator Normand Chaurette (A

Midsummer's Night Dream, The Tempest, Othello, Romeo and Juliet) to spruce up the translation specifically for her production.

The result is less subtlety in prose, and traces of a fast-food society. For one thing, the play was seriously amputated. Yet this point is by no means a criticism. After all, how many of us would want to sit for a four or five hour long play? However, one can suspect that more familiar (and perhaps more banal) forms of theatre were introduced in order to suit a "give it to me straight" audience.

An example? Sure. In other translations, what was called Romeo's "pump well-flowered" (in French: escarpin bien fleuri), in this translation, simply became Romeo's "buttock" (in French: les fesses). It's quick. It's simple. It's modern. It is, unfortunately, us.

But don't despair! The text is

nonetheless very good. The main point in translation is to preserve the sense of the words and that was successfully done.

More about modernism is to be heard from costume designer Méridith Caron. "For this play, we wanted to display a certain modernism. We didn't want it to be too romantic." Though it might surprise you at first sight to see Romeo and the other young men dressed in black leather from head to toe, it turns out to work quite well. Better still, the rationale behind this choice is surprisingly sound. Caron says that "In *Romeo and Juliet*, there is a great notion of desire," and that "at every provocation, the swords come out. There is a lot of violence. The leather helps the passing of the text. Now let's see... Modernism... violence... desire... black leather. Bravo. Good thinking.

A good blend of the director's and the costume designer's work is found in the servant-clown character. As he sports long blond hair, platform boots, a short skirt, a graffiti filled black leather jacket and a highly strung gait, he succeeds in winning the audience's attention, while avoiding taking the light away from central characters.

In all, it's a grand production. The actors are good. The costumes are beautiful. The set's well thought out. The music and lighting add meaning. The balcony scene is poignant, and Romeo and Juliet's death scene is sincere. Go see it and leave having loved it. Don't worry, you can't be a sucker for liking good work.

\*\*\* Please note that the quotes have been freely translated by the writer.

(continued from page 5) ries of flashbacks, in which the referee becomes the girl who dies. As she cries for help, Bill and Frank act in perfect unison both in motion and in voice, and ignore her. This death presumably leads the men to their treatment of women and the way in which they view compassion and desire.

Indeed, Frank says during the course of the play: "Compassion is illogical. If you let it, compassion will kill desire—especially the desire to be first." As he remembers sitting on the beach waiting for the girl's body to wash ashore, he manages to overcome his grief enough to take pride in his victory in the race.

The message of the play, if there is one, is that compassion and humanity may not be necessary to have a successful business career. Indeed, it is the more brutal of the two men who has the most success in his job. In the end though, they have unhappy wives, children they don't really know, and are on their way to becoming just like their fa-

thers. The security of their jobs is ill reward for their misery.

While *Never Swim Alone* has the potential to become a drawn-out allegory on the corruption of the Canadian male by consumerism, it goes far beyond that. Everyone has a little bit of Frank and Bill inside of them, and as the play explores the relationships

between men and women and compassion and desire, we are left hoping to never become as ruthless as they are.

*Never Swim Alone* is at Player's Theater from Jan 18 - 23, at 8PM. Tickets are \$6 for students, \$10 for everyone else. Call for reservations at 398-3816.

## EVENTS

### Thursday, January 21

Anthony Cools performs at Club Soda. Show begins at 8:30pm. Admission is \$11.50.

McGill Christian Fellowship is hosting a talk, Science and Faith: Are They in Conflict? at 1 pm in Shatner 107/8.

### Friday, January 22

The Rare Books and Special Collections presents Poetry @ Lunch. Carmine Starino will read in the Lande Reading Room on the 4th floor of the McLennan Library. Reading begins at 12:15. Admission is free.

### Saturday, January 23

Harmonica Zeke is performing at La Cervoise at 9:30pm. 4457 St. Laurent. Admission is free.

Adieu Michel is performing at Club Soda. Show begins at 8pm. Admission is \$10.

### Monday, January 25

L'équipe du Théâtre de Quat'Sous et l'équipe du Théâtre de l'Opsis vous invitent à la présentation de la pièce Je Suis une Mouette [non, ce n'est pas

ca]. 20h. RSVP 845-7277

McGill Christian Fellowship is holding a talk in Leacock 232. Subject: Is Anyone There? Looking for the Existence of God.

### Wednesday January 27

The McGill Anti-Smoking Society will meet at 5 pm at the McGill University Bookstore conference room (3rd floor). For info call 985-2264.

Queens of the Stone Age at Foufounes Electriques.

### Calls for Volunteers

The Daily invites all interested parties to come and help out with writing, photos, or layout. Drop by the office at Shatner B-03 or call 398-6784.

The Cancer Research Society is looking for skiers who would like to volunteer during the Q92/CIQC Crazy Fun Races. Volunteers are required to have transportation to the events and are asked to help with registration. Events are held at the major ski centres from January 16 to March 23. Ski passes will be made available for each volunteer. For more info, call Nancy at 861-9227, ext. 28 or e-mail her at [events@cancer-research](mailto:events@cancer-research)

society.ca.

Queer Line is seeking volunteers for their January training sessions. If interested, call 398-6822 and leave a message.

The CLSC NDG/Montréal West is looking for volunteers to assist individuals with different needs on a one-to-one basis or to help with office/reception work. For more info call the CLSC Volunteer Co-ordination office at 485-7811, ext. 1015 or 1020.

If you love babies or want experience working with infant twins, CLSC René-Cassin needs you. The organization seeks volunteers to work one-on-one with overwhelmed families with recent twins in the West End. Patience, reliability and experience necessary. Call Elizabeth at 488-9163 ext. 351 for more info.

Help stop elder abuse! The Elder Abuse Info-line is seeking bilingual volunteers to help seniors in need and raise awareness around elder abuse and seniors' rights. You will receive appropriate training, develop communication skills and be part of a dynamic volunteer team. For more info call Heather Hart: 488-9163 local 351 for more info.

ext. 360.

Volunteer to be a Best Buddy! Best Buddies creates friendships between people with developmental disabilities and college students. For more info e-mail [bb@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:bb@ssmu.mcgill.ca)

Santropol Roulant is looking for volunteers to deliver meals to those living with a loss of autonomy. With project GO, student involvement is facilitated by bringing meals to the Shatner Building. Those interested call Genevieve at 282-0245.

Do you like paperwork, working with forms and numbers? CLSC René-Cassin in Côte St. Luc needs you. We are presently recruiting volunteers to help with our Income Tax clinic for low-income residents in March and April 1999. Free five-day training provided by Revenue Canada in February. If you are available during the day and would like to help people call Elizabeth at 488-9163 local 351 for more info.

Contactivity Centre for Seniors, is looking for volunteers and donations. Activities include a telephone check up service, community involvement for elders,

social development, health and physical well being programs and home support services. Contact 932-3433 for more info.

The Shalom Line seeks patient and compassionate listeners, over 20 years of age, to volunteer on their confidential, anonymous listening line. To get involved call 735-3541

Call for volunteers at Atwater Library and Computing Centre. Three hours a week only. Pick up an application at the circulation desk or call Susan McGuire, 937-3169.

Volunteers wanted for YM-YWHA Computer Drop-In Centre. Volunteers must be computer literate and enjoy working with teens. Call Abba at 737-6551, ext. 230.

Improve your leadership, public speaking and group skills by volunteering at CLSC René-Cassin. CLSC is presently recruiting volunteers to work in an In-home Simulation program. You will be trained and supervised by professional and learn to run activities with seniors, the market of the future. Call 488-9163 local 351 for info.

# daily classifieds

Ads may be placed through the Daily Business Office, Room B-07, University Centre, 9h00-14h00. Deadline is 14h00, two working days prior to publication. McGill Students & Staff (with valid ID): \$4.75 per day, 3 or more consecutive days, \$4.25 per day. General Public: \$5.00 per day, or \$5.00 per day for 3 or more consecutive days. Extra charges may apply, prices include applicable GST or PST. Full payment should accompany your advertising order and may be made in cash or by personal cheque (for amounts over \$20 only). For more information, please visit our office or call 398-6790. WE CANNOT TAKE CLASSIFIED ADS OVER THE PHONE. PLEASE CHECK YOUR AD CAREFULLY WHEN IT APPEARS IN THE PAPER. The Daily assumes no financial responsibility for errors, or damages due to errors. Ad will re-appear free of charge upon request if information is incorrect due to our error. The Daily reserves the right not to print any classified ad.

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## The (Great) White North? Racism, Ethnicity, Language and Identity in Canada

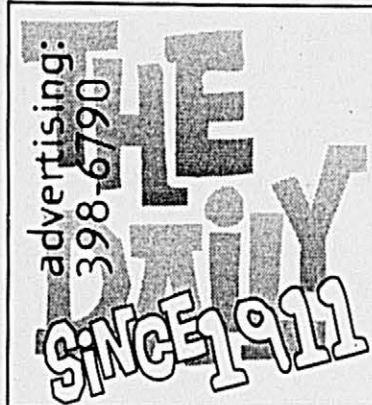
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Ravi Pendakur - Senior Researcher, Heritage Canada  
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Arts 160 (Arts Council Room)

For more information please feel free to contact Howard Ramos at 398-2974 or [hramos@po-box.mcgill.ca](mailto:hramos@po-box.mcgill.ca)

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## The Post Graduate Students' Society PGSS ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA

The nomination and petition period for PGSS elections and referenda is now open.

### Elected Positions

All regular members returning for the 1999-2000 academic year are eligible to run. Nominations for elected positions require 50 signatures of members.

The following Executive Positions are available:

Executive Chairperson

External Affairs and Government Relations Co-ordinator

Finance Co-ordinator

Internal Affairs Co-ordinator

University and Academic Affairs Co-ordinator

The following Representative Positions are available:

Board of Governors

Masters Senator

Doctoral Senator

### Referenda

Petitions for referenda on any question dealing with Society affairs may be made by members. A petition of 50 signatures is required.

The petition period ends at 5:00 pm, February 2, 1999 and the nomination period ends at 5:00 pm, February 3, 1999.

**SEAN PENN  
KEVIN SPACEY  
ROBIN WRIGHT PENN  
CHAZZ PALMINTERI  
GARRY SHANDLING  
ANNA PAQUIN  
and MEG RYAN**



FINE LINE FEATURES PRESENTS A FILM BY ANTHONY DBAZAN SEAN PENN KEVIN SPACEY ROBIN WRIGHT PENN CHAZZ PALMINTERI  
GARRY SHANDLING ANNA PAQUIN AND MEG RYAN "BURLYBURLY" EDITING DAVID RUBIN MUSIC AMANDA SCHER-DENMEIR MUSIC DAVID BAIRDWALD

**The McGill Daily**

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**STARTS JANUARY 22!**